

# MY PREHISTORIC SHARK TOOTH

by  
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This fossilized “shark tooth” came to me without any provenience. Fortunately, George Colvin gave a presentation to the Mound City Chapter on the subject of pre-historical and fossilized sharks’ teeth.

He informed me that it belonged to a *Carcharodon Megalodon*. This, he further stated, is an extinct large (size of a school bus) shark. My specimen measures 4-5/8 inches. The largest he knew of was 6-3/4 inches and belonged to Vito Bertucci.

Wanting to know a little more, I consulted Squier & Davis. There on page 282 of the 150th anniversary reissue of their *ANCIENT MONUMENTS OF THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY* was a drawing very similar to my fossil.

Again, wanting to know more, I consulted *THE HOPEWELL MOUND GROUP OF OHIO* by Warren K. Morehead published in 1922 about excavations he did in August 1891. There is understandably much consternation about the length of time between the field work and the publication. Stephen Williams is quite pointed about this on pps

xix and xx of a much later publication, *THE HOPEWELL SITE* by Greber and Ruhl in 2000. At any rate, on p 145 of the former, and p 158 of the latter are identical drawings very suggestive of my tooth. For certain, the Hopewell knew of the *Megalodon* teeth.

Why are the drawings identical, and who drew them? Morehead on p 81 of his book credits Mr. C.C. Willoughby, director of the Peabody museum at Cambridge, MA, for 300 pages of notes and drawings which he made after personally studying the Hopewell collection shortly after the exploration was completed. Mr. Willoughby was described as an accomplished artist (Greber, p1). Morehead tendered his “most sincere and appreciative thanks” to Willoughby.

Greber, on p157 quotes directly from Willoughby. “A few fossil teeth of the shark were taken from altar 2. With the exception of the larger specimen shown at a in Fig. 6.9, they were fragmentary.” The figure referred to was a drawing very similar to my tooth, and identical to Fig. 42 on p 145

of Morehead. This also referred to altar 2. (Altars 1 & 2 were located in Mound 25 of the Hopewell Works, I believe.)

So, we have at least two artists portraying fossil teeth from a *Carcharodon Megalodon* found in Mound twenty-five of the Hopewell Works in Ross County, namely E. G. Squier (or Davis) and C.C. Willoughby. Examples of these teeth are apparently still available to the interested collector.

## References:

Greber and Ruhl  
*The Hopewell Site*  
2000 Eastern National, Ft. Washington, PA

Morehead, Warren K.  
*Hopewell Mound Group of Ohio*  
1922 Field Museum, Publication 21, Chicago, IL

Squier and Davis  
*Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley*  
1847 Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.



Figure 1 (Coppel) The “front side”, very similar to the drawing by Willoughby.



Figure 2 (Coppel) The “back side”, not shown in any of the drawings. The white material is thought to be barnacles.